

- Home
  - News
  - Opinion
  - Books
  - Calendar
  - Young Adults
  - Restaurants
  - Food
  - Milestones
  - Holidays
  - SourceBook
  - Shopping
  - Marketplace/R E
  - Personals
  - About Us
  - Advertisers
  - Communicate
  - Community Links
- search
- Current
- Archive
- search

## Cover Story

### Virtual Success Story

Phil Jacobs  
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Before the 5,500 delegates to the Republican Party's National Convention assemble later this month, each one will have received a CD-ROM welcoming them to New York.

On that CD are welcomes from Mayor Michael Bloomberg, former mayors Rudolph Guiliani, Ed Koch and other dignitaries.

But this CD is more than a welcome, it's a virtual tour of New York City with everything from tours of the five boroughs to New York's history (New York was the first capital of the U.S.) to the number of Broadway plays with an New York theme (33 to be exact).

There's hip, edgy background music with tight, colorful camera shots. It's as if one is watching a carefully directed, photographed and edited short movie.

The CD was distributed by NYC & Co., New York's office of tourism's marketing organization. But the idea and implementation of the CD down to the nitty gritty details (Did you know there are 53,000 acres of parkland in New York?) came from a small office in Pikesville.

He's known to many of his clients as CJ Kramer. But if you're looking for him in the Eruv Book, you'll find him as Chananya. He's a 33-



Chananya Kramer and Steve Levin produced a Welcome to New York CD that will be distributed to the 5,500 delegates coming to the GOP convention.

year-old father of four, married to Faige. He's a 17-year student at Ner Israel, and one of the more innovative, energetic and bright lights one will meet in quite some time.

He started pretty much by digitally photographing color wars at an overnight camp. But in the highly analytic and philosophic yeshiva world, where each word on a page of Talmud is examined, argued and re-examined, he also "got" the message of artistry digitized.

On a sultry summer's afternoon, Mr. Kramer sits in his office with Steve Levin, the vice president of marketing for their company. There is a photograph of Mr. Kramer with President Bush along with family pictures. The conversation ranges in scope from art to opportunity.

The business is called Kol-Rom Multimedia. The "kol" and "rom" are Hebrew words for loud voice or make your voice heard. That's exactly the intention of this management team as it serves its various clients.

And none was more satisfied than NYC & Co.

"We're the city's convention bureau," said communications director Lisa Mortman. "It's our job to look at the Republican National Convention as an opportunity to build business for New York City with RNC visitors and guests. Our goal is also to secure future trips. When we discussed putting together something like a CD-ROM, we really wanted to create something intuitive, user friendly that was inviting and allowed us to really be very personal with each visitor. We understood we'd be entering their home, and we wanted that virtual tour to reflect that face.

"With CJ's help, we really put together a welcome CD-ROM that people will enjoy exploring."

Ms. Mortman said that NYC & Co. had never produced a CD-ROM before.

"To his credit, he really was able to help us realize all we could do in this medium," she said. "He was able to figure out and solve technical problems. CJ was really terrific, he's a real team player. He worked tirelessly, and made sure the job was done, well and on time. We think he was terrific."

Ms. Mortman added that the connection was made between Kol-Rom and NYC & Co. largely through Mr. Kramer's determination.

"He came to us," she said. "CJ's a great entrepreneur, and he saw an opportunity to work with us. He was relentless until we agreed to work with him. He wouldn't take no for an answer. So we said fine."

Kol-Rom does extensive work in the Jewish community as well. It provided its services to the Jewish Renaissance Foundation of Perth Amboy, N.J. Also, one of its more involved projects was an ArtScroll virtual tour of the Eastern European locations of pre-Holocaust yeshivas. The tour was part of a project undertaken by noted speaker Rabbi Paysach Krohn.

"Kol Rom is an extremely efficient and professional organization," said Rabbi Krohn. "They were able to bring out through the interactive CD the intensity and feeling that I tried to give over on the trip. This was a highly emotional trip. Sometimes when you're there, it doesn't come across. Kol-Rom gave over the sense of one being there."

And then there are other projects. Mr. Levin talks about Kol-Rom's work with U.S. Lacrosse.

"I didn't know anything about lacrosse at all," said Mr. Levin. "It takes time and work. I spent anywhere from five to 10 hours with the lacrosse people, getting to know them and getting to understand their needs."

"It's about editing and directing," said Mr. Kramer. "It's not programs. We are artists who learned how to do programming. This is about designing. We are a design company, not a software company."

Indeed, Mr. Kramer coordinates camera shots, video, art work, graphics, spokespeople, history and so much detail, "in five years we'll be doing something completely different the way things change," he said. "We'll always be on the cutting edge. "The nature of our work is sophisticated, and so satisfying."

Other projects?

Mr. Levin said the company is interested in collaborating with Ringling Brothers Circus. It is also undertaking a sports project they call "100 Greatest Yankee Moments." But all of this is still in the works.

For sure Mr. Kramer is looking at the NYC project as a springboard for his business.

And as Ms. Mortman said, Kol-Rom is on its way.

"These are great people," she said. "They took care of every detail, worked tirelessly. They were terrific."

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